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THE NEW YORK

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## TRUSTEES OF THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

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## Thirteenth Meeting of the Latin Club

### CHANGE OF PLACE

The thirteenth regular meeting of The New York Latin Club is called for Saturday, December 3, at 12 M, in the Hotel St Denis, corner of Broadway and Eleventh Street, New York. Professor John C Rolfe of the University of Pennsylvania, will address the club. The subject will be announced later. All persons who are interested, whether teachers of Latin or not, are cordially invited to be present. The plan is to serve luncheon at 12 M, promptly, so that there shall be no delay. The address will follow the luncheon, and adjournment will occur about 2 P M, *thus leaving the afternoon still unbroken, for those who attend.* Please send a postal card at once to the Sec'y, Mr A L Hodges, 309 W 101 st, N Y, if you intend to be present, so that we may inform Mr Taylor, the proprietor of the hotel, how many to expect. *Please attend to this at once.*

The subject of Professor Rolfe's address will be "Extracts from a Teacher's Notebook".

The price of the luncheon will be 75 cents to members, \$1.00 to others. A ticket entitling a member to the three luncheons of the year can be secured of the Secretary in advance for \$2.00.

Out-of-town teachers may find it convenient to be in the city on the day announced.

Information as to the conditions of membership in The Latin Club can be had at this meeting, or by referring to Nos 3 and 10 of THE LATIN LEAFLET, or by addressing the Secretary

H H BICE, *President*  
A L HODGES, *Secretary*

## The Magical Papyri, a Source for Our Knowledge of Ancient Life

### IN III PARTS—PART II

Who, then, were the authors? As I said before, it is customary to seek them in Alexandria, and among the Gnostics. Dieterich has even gone so far as to call the papyri the "Vulgata" of the Gnosis. But the reasons for this assertion have always seemed to me more specious than convincing. We find certainly in these books a mixture of the most heterogeneous things: in one and the same breath they invoke Typhon, Osiris, Jesus, Abraham, Adonai, Apollo, Ménê, not to mention the numerous names of almost cabalistic angels and demons of lower orders, with their unintelligible appellations. And it is also true that this seething mixture of beliefs forms one of the charges made against the Gnostics by their contemporaries, the Fathers of the Church. But any one who reads, say Hippolytus's *Refutatio Hæresium*, must see that, after all, the Christian element is the predominant note in the Gnostic speculations. No matter how far removed their doctrines may be from the teaching of the true Church, still, one can, and must, call them Christian. On the other hand, Christ plays but an unimportant part in the papyrus books, compared with their other ingredients. I should say that the general impression left in the mind of the reader of the papyri is that of three component elements, the Jewish, the Egyptian, and the Greek. That the Jewish element is, relatively, more fully represented than the other two, does not justify any conclusion; for the Jewish monotheism did not allow of a division into good and evil forces, and so we have, after all, only the same monotonous Iao-Sabaoth-Adonai litany, upon which our writers ring all possible changes. Certainly, the man who conjured ghosts by the seal which Solomon put upon the lips of the prophet Jeremiah, cannot have been any too well acquainted with Hebrew history. At any rate, he cannot have been a Jew. If

on the other hand, only certain figures of the Egyptian, and Greek, pantheon, are represented, we must not draw any inferences from this as to the relative merits of these tributaries to the muddy river of superstition: Among the facts of the Egyptian religion, the Osiris myth appealed especially to the mind of the sorcerer, as offering a prototype of the fight between himself and the powers which he wished to subjugate. And so we see him try both sides of the battle. Now he is Osiris, who will be born over again after all his trials; now, and this is the majority of cases, he invokes, or identifies himself with, Typhon. Other elements of Egyptian belief are the various incarnations in which the Sun god is thought to appear during the different hours of the day. More important than this, however, is the strong influence of Egyptian customs upon our papyri. Invariably, for instance, persons are introduced as N N, "whom such a mother bore". This is contrary to the Greek custom, which traces descent through the father, but in strict conformance to the Egyptian law of later times. Other features derived from Egyptian life are: the names of certain garments, e g, the gown, or the belt, of Isis, the cord of Anubis, the linen of the same god. Once the magician is ordered to don the bandages of a mummy. In other charms, again, it is assumed that the Nile is "the water" in the sorcerer's neighborhood. Some scholars have laid great stress upon the fact of Identification as a means of sorcery: the sorcerer represents himself as identical with the god whose help he wants to invoke. This feature must be eliminated, however; for it is common to all witchcraft in all parts of the globe, and is not characteristic of Egypt alone. No more can we make use of the fact so often adduced that secret names of the gods play so important a part. For this also is a common feature of witchcraft everywhere and in all ages.

Turning now to the Greek element, we shall find the same phenomenon which we just observed. There is an undoubted acquaintance with some parts of the Greek religion. Three of its deities occupy the foreground of the stage, Helios, Selene, and Aphrodite. Helios is the great revealer of all secrets, Selene is the archgoddess of witchcraft, and Aphrodite is the goddess with whom most of the magical actions are concerned. For it is undoubtedly true that love, and its joys and woes, fills the greatest part of the books with which we are dealing. Next in importance, perhaps, is Her-

mes, identified with Thoyt, the Egyptian god of writing, and with the Greek Psychopompos. All other gods play only a secondary role, even Apollo, whose figure gains in importance solely through his identification with Helios, and Hekate, who is not mentioned as often as connection with witchcraft in the ordinary Greek authors would lead us to expect. It is worthy of our notice, furthermore, that, in sharp contrast to the Hebrew angels, the lower Greek divinities are comparatively neglected. All the greater is the part played by the spirits of the dead. Somebody might feel inclined, again, to scent here Egyptian influence, but a perusal of Erwin Rohde's *Psyche* removes all likelihood of such an assumption. Features of Greek life proper are rarer than the use of the Greek language would seem to warrant. There is really, as far as I can see, nothing which one is compelled to trace back to the European Greeks. A few allusions, however, may have to do with this origin. Little stress can be laid upon the frequent mention of the sea, for nobody will assign the papyri to Upper Egypt, while the inhabitants of the lower delta must have been familiar with the "Great Green", as the Egyptians called it. Still, it is evident that some prescriptions must have migrated inland from the sea coast. For when we read: use sea-water, or spring-water, or rain-water, or any flowing water, we are compelled to think that the one which could be procured most easily was substituted for that which could not be had in the locality concerned. Yet the gist of this recipe, as well as of a few others, seems to lead us far away from Egypt. Namely, they all require the use of spring-water, or of water from a dug well. Now, to quote Erman's *Aegypten*: frequent winter rains occur only along the coasts of the Delta, and for a few miles inland. Therefore the country lacks all springs and wells, and is entirely dependent upon the water of the holy river.

Some scholars have tried to explain such apparently unattainable demands as the best proof of the wickedness of the ancient wizard, who purposely made it as difficult as possible to obtain all the ingredients necessary to the success of the magical operation. In confirmation, they also point to the gruesome things, which are prescribed, as, blood of the holy hawk, the head, or the sperm, of a snake, the faeces of a crocodile, etc. But in one of these papyri there exists, happily, a long glossary of such ingredients, to procure which must have staggered even the most expert magician.

Now, these lists show that the names are mere innocent play on words. Thus we read: hair of the mandril-ape = anise-seed, blood drawn from a man's head = beans, human gall = barley juice. There can be no doubt that the idea of substitution, so widely prevailing in all ancient religions, and surely prominent in Christianity, has been carried here to its last extremes. If, then, such demands as that for spring water have been made, they point with reasonable certainty to the origin of the magical practice under consideration from a country which may, or may not, have been Greece, where, just as everywhere else, magic has been flourishing from times immemorial.

The question might reasonably be asked, whether the papyri do not show any Roman influence, since they were composed after at least two hundred years of Roman rule. As far as religion goes, this question can be truthfully answered in the negative. Once only, in an incantation, two words occur which have a Latin sound: *materna mauorte*, which may, or may not, contain some dark reference to Mavors or some other Roman deity. But otherwise the Italic pantheon "is conspicuous by its absence." Nor is this to be wondered at. For the official Roman religion never gained a foothold in a country where even the Roman emperor had to conform to the native beliefs. And the Roman legionaries, elsewhere powerful missionaries of their local beliefs, were absent from the troops serving in Egypt. For these, for the most part, were recruited from among the Greek inhabitants of the country. There are, however, some few traces of Roman influence in references to gladiators, and to the bath houses with their furnaces. For these latter, in spite of their Greek name (*Hypocausteria*) are a Roman invention. Once, furthermore, we read the word *MOYLOI* instead of *HEMIONOI*, probably owing to the late date of the passage in which the word occurs.

ERNST RIESS

DeWitt Clinton H S

## THE NEW YORK LATIN LEAFLET

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